

Merry Sukkot!

By Rabbi Yehudah ben Shomeyr

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed..."

There was no snow on the ground that fateful night, no wise men either, They didn't come on the scene till two years later. No, just the barnyard crew from George Orwell's Animal Farm and a few shepherds. No, the time of the year was the Hebrew month of Tishrei, during the festival of Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles.

Luke 2

1And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

2(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

You see, Caesar was no dummy. He knew the Jews would be all in one place, and going back to their hometowns for the last of the three pilgrimage festivals and He may have thought, "Since everyone is in one place, might as well hit two birds with one stone and take a tax and a census."

During Sukkot, every Jewish family by Torah is required to build a 3 sided booth for the festival to (if weather permits) live in or at least have a meal, a study or a time of prayer in there. It commemorates the 40 years that Israel wandered and camped in the desert. If one's life or health was at risk they were not required to stay in a sukkah and seeing as Miriam (Mary) being pregnant with Yeshua (Jesus) Yosef (Joseph) sought out a hotel, and inn but to no avail.

Luke 2:6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And as fate would have it, they ended up in a sukkah of sorts anyway! Have you ever noticed most nativity scene? The figurines are usually under a 3 sided structure with a straw like roof... in other words, a

sukkah! For the Messiah to be qualified as Messiah He had to obey the Torah in every way, and G-d caused it so that Yeshua was born in a sukkah!

Yeshua said Himself that He is the Bread of Life (John 6:48). Yeshua was born in Beyt-Lechem, Bethlehem, being translated, the House of Bread. And when He was born He was laid in, of all things, a feeding trough, a manger, in which grain, which is used to make bread, was put to feed the livestock. And in the Scriptures, especially in Psalm 23, we are likened as unto sheep, who at times eat grain.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The word "dwelt" comes from the word "sukkah". So we can say Yeshua housed himself in a sukkah of flesh and "sukkah-ed" among us. This word "sukkah" as in it the root word "Shekinah" which is used to describe the manifest presence of G-d dwelling or "sukkah-ing" among Israel in the Tabernacle and Temple. So Yeshua the Messiah, the figurative Son of G-d, the emanation of G-d Himself "sukkah-ed" now in flesh among Israel as He did in a cloud in the Tabernacle and Temple.

Allow me to quote from my personal Statement of Faith in regards to this Messiah.

"I believe Yeshua Ha Mashiach of Nazareth is the prophesied Messiah of Israel. That He was FULLY YHWH to be able to redeem us from our sins, and FULLY man to have the right to redeem us from our sins, to be our Kinsmen Redeemer (Ruth, Jer.17:5-7, Jn.1). Yeshua is the perfect, holy, sinless Messiah, the Figurative Son of YHWH, who is the Word that became flesh dwelt among us (Jn.1:14) who came to dwell in a mortal body that never saw corruption (Ps.14:10), a pure deity manifest in the flesh. He was not an incarnation, which would denote that 100% of YHWH came in the flesh. Yeshua was FULLY YHWH in the flesh, but not 100% YHWH. YHWH is so infinite that He is everywhere and fills everything, so it would be impossible for ALL of YHWH to be limited to a mortal body. In the words of Dr. Friedman, "If we were to go to the Mediterranean Sea and fill a glass with sea water, we can say that all the water in the glass is truly sea water. However we cannot call the glass, "The Mediterranean Sea." There is much more to the Mediterranean Sea than the glass. Yet nonetheless, the water in that glass is truly Mediterranean Sea water through and through." I believe that Yeshua is the Kohen Ha Gadol (High priest) who became the

ultimate, once and for all atoning sacrifice Himself, for all mankind (Heb.4:14-5:10; 6:19-8:2)."

Fast forward to Matthew chapter 17 to the Mount of Transfiguration, when Yeshua's Talmidim (Disciples) Kefa (Peter), Ya'akov (Jacob), and Yochannan (John) see Moshe (Moses) and Eliyahu (Elijah) talking with Yeshau the Messiah and Kefa said:

(Matt. 17:4) "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

No, he didn't want to build a shrine to worship all three of them. He basically was saying, "Hey! If Moshe and Eliyahu are gonna stick around for Sukkot, let's build them and you (speaking to Yeshua) a sukkah!"

The Scriptures never command us to celebrate the birth of the Messiah, but if you choose to do so, please do it on the right time of the year. The Messiah wasn't born on December 25th; He doesn't even go by the solar calendar for that matter. You know who was born on December 25th? Saturnalia, Mithrah, Tammuz, all of which are pagan deities.

Sukkot not only reminds us of the wilderness where we came from, and the birth of the Messiah, but as we look up to the sky through our sukkah roof we anticipate and look forward to our future home and to Messiah's return, which Netzari Rabbi's speculate will be the season of His return too.

So this Sukkot as you pray or eat a meal in your sukkah. Ask G-d to make you a sukkah, a place in which the Messiah can dwell, a place where the Messiah can dwell among us.

Shalom, Chag Semeach Sukkot!

-- Rabbi Yehudah